

**In the claims:**

Amend claim 1 as follows:

B2  
1. (Amended) A coating composition for attaining buff-free alignment of liquid crystals on a liquid crystal display device, the coating composition comprising a positively or negatively charged heterocyclic rigid-rod poly(ionomer) or salt thereof, with (i) a low molecular weight counter-ion or (ii) a basic or acidic ionizable rigid-rod polymer, and a solvent which is capable of dissolving the heterocyclic rigid-rod poly(ionomer) or salt thereof.

Kindly cancel claim 2.

In each of claims 3-5, change the dependency from "claim 2" to --claim 1--.

Please place claim 6 in independent form by amending it as follows:

B3  
6. (Amended) [The coating composition of claim 1] A coating composition for attaining buff-free alignment of liquid crystals on a liquid crystal display device, the coating composition comprising a rigid-rod poly(ionomer) or salt thereof, with (i) a low molecular weight counter-ion or (ii) a basic or acidic ionizable rigid-rod polymer, and a solvent which is capable of dissolving the rigid-rod poly(ionomer) or salt thereof wherein the rigid-rod poly(ionomer) is xanthan gum.

Kindly cancel claim 11.

In claim 12, line 1, change "11" to -10-.

In claim 13, line 1, change "11" to -10-.

Kindly cancel claim 14.

Please add the following new claims:

B4  
21. (New) A process for manufacturing a buff-free liquid crystal display with planar alignment which comprises applying the composition of claim 6 to an oppositely charged surface of an electrode, followed by a drying step wherein the application step causes the axes of the xanthan gum rigid-rod poly(ionomer)